

# Hillside Elementary School

## Parent/Student Handbook

Dear Parents and Students,

As an educational leader, I strive to make the school in which I work the focal point of an inclusive learning community that creates an inviting atmosphere where all children are excited and motivated to learn, promotes continuous school improvement, fosters a positive relationship between home and school, and holds all stakeholders accountable to clearly established standards for excellence in teaching and learning.

To accomplish this at Hillside we will promote a culture of collaboration in which all stakeholders, including parents, staff, and students, participate in an ongoing dialogue to improve teaching and learning; establish shared goals based upon the strengths and needs of the students; and promote a climate of creative problem solving that effectively connects people to resources for the purpose of improved student achievement and learning. Finally, I will endeavor to develop personal relationships based on mutual respect and appreciation for diversity and blended cultures in order to encourage personal and professional growth from all members of the learning community, including myself.

Respectfully,

Chris A. Mills  
Principal

### **A Few Words to Parents**

The purpose of this handbook is to present and explain the policies and procedures of Hillside Elementary School to ensure that your children are set up for success at Hillside.

We are honored to have your children attend this school. We take our responsibilities as educators very seriously. We strive to create a learning environment that allows students to do their best. We also work hard to prepare students for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead in their educational careers and in their lives, in general.

### **You can help us in several ways:**

1. Be supportive of your child's efforts.
2. Be a partner with your child's teacher. Call your child's teacher with questions about his or her progress.
3. Find a place in your home for your child to keep school materials, along with a quiet place in which to work and study.

4. Teach your child to accept responsibility for his or her actions and to respect the rights and belongings of others.
5. Be supportive of the school's programs and of the efforts of the Parent/Teacher Organization.

### **Additionally, be certain your child knows the following vital pieces of information:**

1. His or her full name
2. Home address
3. Home/cell telephone numbers
4. Full name of mother and father
5. How he or she gets to school
6. How he or she goes home from school each day
7. Full name and phone number of your child care provider
8. Emergency plan for early dismissals or closings of school

### **Hillside's Mission Statement**

The staff, students, and families of Hillside Elementary School are committed to excellence in education. We believe it is essential to provide each child with quality instruction in a safe and nurturing environment while working in cooperative teams and problem solving. We set high standards for personal responsibility and respect for the diversity among all members of our school community.

In accordance with this philosophy, the following objectives are set forth. Hillside Students will:

- Demonstrate competence, according to his/her ability, in the fundamental skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, mathematics, and technology usage.
- Use logical, critical, creative, and independent thinking, according to her/his ability.
- Will develop a curiosity and excitement for learning.
- Will acquire consideration for others through cooperation, interaction, and teamwork, and will respect and appreciate the individual differences of his/her peers.
- Will learn the values of fairness, honesty, and justice in his/her interactions with school personnel and with one another.



## School Hours

7:35 a.m.	Buses/cars unload
7:35 -7:45 a.m.	Breakfast
7:50 a.m.	Tardy Bell
2:35 p.m.	Bus Rider dismissal
2:40 p.m.	Walker/Car Rider dismissal

## Absences and Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in a sequential manner, requiring the understanding of each concept in the order of its presentation. Persistent absenteeism creates a genuine hardship for a student as they may miss necessary prerequisite instruction to understand more complex concepts later.

All students should be in school on time every day. As stated above, arrival is between 7:35-7:50 am. **Students are marked tardy if they are not in class when the 7:50 late bell rings.** Students generally perform best when they arrive at least five minutes prior to the bell. Children should not be dropped-off at school before 7:35 a.m. because student supervision is not available prior to 7:35 a.m. Parents can support their children by establishing routines at home that ensure children arrive on time and by planning appointments or vacations and on weekends, holidays, and after school hours.

If your child will be absent due to illness or other circumstances, please call our 24-hour Absentee Call-In Line at 571-252-2171. Should you need to reach someone in the school office please call 571-252-2170 between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

The Virginia General Assembly requires that a reasonable effort be made to notify the parent or guardian of any pupil who fails to report to school if school personnel have received no indication that the parent or guardian is aware of the pupil's absence. If you have not notified the school or left a message on the answering machine, the office staff will contact you concerning your child's absence. It is essential that parents provide up-to-date phone numbers to us whenever they may change.

## Administrative Staff

Principal	Chris Mills
Assistant Principal	Brian Peppiatt
Registrar	Elizabeth Halley
Bookkeeper	Sabrina McEver
School Health Aide	Margaret Strange

## After-school Activities

Students may only stay after school if we have received signed permission from the parent or guardian prior to the activity.

## Aiphone Security System

Like all LCPS schools, our exterior doors are locked immediately after the arrival bell signals the start of the school day. We have a camera-monitored security system on our front doors and at other points around the building. All visitors must show a photo ID upon admittance to our building.

## Bicycles and scooters

Bicycles and scooters should be locked on one of the bike racks near the driveway exit. Children are not permitted to bring them in to school.

## Birthdays

A very special part of a young child's life is the celebration of his or her birthday. All elementary schools in Loudoun County abide by LCPS guidelines which prohibit students from sharing cupcakes, cookies, or other food items with their classmates/ friends on their birthdays. These guidelines were developed as part of our healthful living campaign.

These suggestions are offered as alternate ways in which we can join in your child's birthday celebration:

1. Consider donating a new, hardback book to the school's library in recognition of the birthday. The librarian can be consulted for [Birthday Book Club](#) suggestions. The names of students who contribute books to the library through this program are listed in each month's school newsletter.
2. We will also recognize all children's birthdays by announcing their names on the Morning News program and by giving them each a birthday pencil.
3. Parents are invited to come have lunch with their children on their birthdays, but should not bring food to share with other children.
4. Children's feelings are easily hurt. Consequently, we ask that party invitations for celebrations outside of school not be distributed at school unless all the students in your child's class are invited.

## Bus Routes and Bus Safety

Bus routes and stops are planned and established by the LCPS Transportation Department. Riding the school bus is a privilege and students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior at all times while on the school bus.



## **Cafeteria**

Hillside Elementary offers students a daily lunch program for \$3.05 for lunch and \$2.10 for breakfast. Adult lunches cost \$4.10.

An open invitation is extended to parents to join their children for lunch. Preschool aged children are also welcome to join us as long as they are supervised by their parent.

We encourage parents to register with My School Bucks and create an account that automatically reloads funds. Parents can track children's purchases through My School Bucks. Parents are responsible for maintaining a positive balance on your student's lunch account. Money can be added to lunch accounts each school day or online. Checks for lunch accounts should be made out to "The County of Loudoun".

## **Due to prevalence of food allergies, sharing of food between students is strictly prohibited.**

### **Changes to Parent Contact Information**

It is important that all parents or guardians maintain up-to-date telephone numbers and email addresses on record in ParentVue. Parents must make changes online in ParentVue. Once a change has been verified by the school registrar, it will become part of the student's permanent record. Parents should contact their child's classroom teacher to inform him or her of changes to contact information.

### **Change of Address**

If you move during the school year, you should make an appointment with the registrar to complete a change of address form. The registrar will inform you if the move has an impact on your child's boundary school. Parents can access school attendance zones on the transportation website ([www.lcps.org/Page/201162](http://www.lcps.org/Page/201162)).

### **Classroom Parties**

The delivery of instruction is our first priority. Classrooms teachers are permitted to plan three parties during the school year. Usually, teachers request parent volunteers to assist with these parties. All parents will receive a letter identifying the planned foods for parties. Parents of students with food allergies are encouraged to work closely with the classroom teacher to plan for your child's safety and enjoyment during classroom parties.

### **Communication**

Periodically, the school administration will use a phone and email messaging service to provide important reminders to our families about upcoming events and/or instructional initiatives. Typically, we send out Blackboard Connect reminders a couple of

days prior to an event. Blackboard Connect uses the contact information of record that you have provided in ParentVue. See above regarding changes to your contact information.

### **Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are held at the end of the first nine-week grading period and as needed by parents and/or teachers throughout the school year. Conferences are very valuable to the overall educational program and to the progress of each student. We believe that ongoing communication and partnership between the school and home are essential for student success. If you have a concern about your child's progress, contact your child's teacher to schedule a conference.

### **Curriculum**

Hillside offers students a full program of elementary studies: Reading, English, Science, Computer Technology, Social Studies, Mathematics, Writing, Spelling, Health and Safety, gifted enrichment, Drug and Alcohol Awareness (Gr. 5), Music, Art, and Physical Education. Classrooms are self-contained. Homeroom teachers are responsible for the majority of classroom instruction. However, some instruction may be departmentalized within the grade level. Children are grouped heterogeneously in our classrooms. Our school has used the Pathways for Learning programs as the basis for our Language Arts instruction.

Students receive music, art, PE, guidance, library, gifted instruction, and technology instruction from specialists. Classroom teachers and specialists are responsible for selecting and defining instructional objectives in each curricular area. They follow the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL's) and LCPS Pacing Guides as they plan and implement the curriculum. Teachers work together on grade level teams to discuss student needs, plan the scope and sequence of instruction, and determine available options in delivering the best possible instruction to students. Teachers work hard to utilize grouping strategies and differentiation in meeting the varying needs of pupils.

### **Discipline**

Hillside's student behavior is generally very good. Students are expected to be respectful, safe, and ready to learn every day. We utilize Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS). This is a behavior framework that focuses on the positive contributions of students and recognizes them through a variety of ways.

Students having challenges meeting the behavior expectations are responded to individually, fairly, and privately. The Student's Rights and Responsibilities booklet describes prescribed and recommended



responses to student behavior that does not meet the expectations mentioned above.

### **Dress Code**

Loudoun County School Board Policy 8-33 prohibits the wearing of any article of clothing that has a picture or printed matter advertising any drug, tobacco, alcohol products, or weapons. Clothing should not cause a distraction for other students or a disruption in school activities.

For safety reasons, proper footwear must be worn to participate in physical activities. Sneakers or other rubber-soled shoes that hold the foot firmly are recommended.

### **Early Dismissal**

Parents are encouraged to arrange appointments, trips, and other activities outside of the school day. Occasionally, it may be necessary to pick up your child during school hours. Please send a note to the classroom teacher on the morning of the early dismissal to ensure that your message is received by the teacher and the office staff. Include the name of the adult who will pick up the child if he or she is not a legal guardian. We will not release your child to anyone other than a parent or legal guardian without a written note even if the person is on the emergency contact list. Please report to the office before 2:15 pm to sign-out your child.

### **Emergency Plans and Drills**

All schools are required to have comprehensive Emergency Response Plans that are updated, approved, and reviewed on an annual basis as required by the Code of VA (2.2-3705.2). School Emergency Response Plans are exempt from FOIA disclosure to ensure the safety and well-being of the students and staff. Fire, tornado, earthquake, and lockdown drills are conducted as required by Loudoun County Public Schools and the Virginia Department of Education. Building evacuation routes are posted in each classroom and in other areas of the school. School bus emergency exit drills are practiced by all students twice each year, with the first drill occurring during the first 30 instructional days of school.

### **Emergency Information**

In case of emergency, each student is required to have the names of emergency contacts on file in ParentVue. Parents should complete the Virtual First Day folder information in ParentVue to ensure that the school staff have up to date information in the event of an emergency. Parents can access ParentVue at:

<https://www.lcps.org/Page/154534>

### **Enrollment/Registration**

Children physically residing in Loudoun County who will be five years old on or before September 30, 2019 are eligible for admission to kindergarten. Parents must complete the online pre-registration process before scheduling a registration appointment. All necessary information regarding the registration process can be found on the LCPS website.

<https://www.lcps.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=1012>

The following documents are required for enrollment:

- Proof of Residence
- An original birth certificate
- Verification of residency
- A certificate of physical examination and evidence of all necessary immunizations.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips serve as a means of enhancing the curriculum in ways which can not be attained in the classroom. The foremost concern of Hillside Elementary School is that the students remain supervised and safe during field trips. For elementary students, a minimum ratio of at least one chaperone to every ten students is required. The age of the children attending and the nature of the field trip may require more adult supervision. Teachers will carry copies of emergency care cards, student medication which needs to be dispensed, and a first-aid kit.

Parents should consult with their child's classroom teacher regarding opportunities to chaperone field trips. The maximum number of chaperones needed on a trip is determined by the classroom teacher and space on the bus. Parents may choose to drive their own cars and meet the class at the field trip site. However, children MUST ride the approved buses to and from the field trip location. Non-LCPS children are not permitted to use ride the bus and should not be brought on field trips, as they may detract from the parents' ability to help with the supervision of our students.

### **Fund Raising**

The PTO and the school periodically hold fundraising activities to supplement LCPS funding and enhance the school's instructional program. Please be advised: LCPS policy prohibits elementary students from participating in any door-to-door solicitation or fund raising.



## **Gifted Program**

Programs are available for gifted students at all grade levels in all schools in Loudoun County. Differentiated instruction is provided to gifted youngsters in grades K-5. The Search classroom resource program is part of the K-3 standard curriculum and Futura, a county-wide center-based program, serves identified gifted students in grades 4 and 5.

## **Newsletter/Peachjar**

We will continue offering the monthly school newsletter and other timely information to be published through Peachjar. Peachjar is an electronic flyer management system that saves us hundreds of dollars in copying and paper costs each year. We encourage parents to download the Peachjar app and subscribe to Hillside Elementary school.

## **Library**

The library is open daily and is supervised by the librarian and library assistant. Library classes are held for grades K-5 one time per week for library instruction and the enjoyment of materials and books. The library is also open to students, under the supervision of a classroom teacher, for the purpose of completing related assignments, such as independent study projects.

The library collection is constantly updated and expanded. Books are chosen for either their educational or recreational value. A variety of audio-visual materials are available through the library for teacher use in the classroom. Parents are financially responsible for lost or damaged library books.

## **Lost and Found**

All lost and found items are kept in the hallway outside the multi-purpose room. More valuable items are kept in the school office. At the end of each school year, unclaimed items are washed and given to charity.

## **Illness or Injury**

In case of illness or injury, a student will be cared for temporarily by a member of the school staff, preferably the school health clinic specialist. The parents or authorized adults listed on the emergency card will be contacted to pick-up any student who is ill. If a serious illness or injury occurs, 911 will be contacted immediately prior to parent notification. If parents cannot be contacted and immediate medical attention is needed, a school administrator or designee will accompany the child to the hospital.

## **Medication**

Students are not allowed to possess any prescription or non-prescription medication at school or on an LCPS school bus. Parents or guardians must deliver the medication in the original container to the school clinic or office with the doctor's orders for dispensing the medications. Medication Forms are available in the clinic and/or on-line. Parents must pick up any remaining medicine from the clinic or office at the end of the school year.

Certain students may be authorized to carry life-saving medicine in their backpacks, with written orders from the family physician and approval by LCPS Health Services.

Below are the procedures for students who must take medication during the school day. Refrigeration is available in the health suite if needed.

### **PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS:**

1. The medication must be in the original container, with the prescription label.
2. Medication will be kept in the clinic, unless specifically stated instructions from the doctor say otherwise.
3. Medications will accompany the children on field trips.

### **NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS:**

1. Must be in the original container.
2. Must be clearly identified as to the name and type of medication and dosage instructions.
3. A note signed and dated by the parent giving the child's name, medication name, dosage instruction, specific dosage times, and other necessary instructions must accompany the medication.
4. All medication, including cough drops, sun screen, and contact lens solution must be delivered to the Health Clinic Specialist by parents.

## **Make-up Work**

The school will provide make-up work for absences. Students or their parents are responsible for requesting make-up work immediately upon the student's return to school. If dates of a student's absence are known in advance, the teacher should be notified. Planned assignments may be given prior to a planned absence with adequate notification. An appropriate period of time, based on the length of the absence, will be allowed for completion of make-up work. The school will not be responsible for preparing all work for absences. Teachers will collaborate with parents to develop a work plan for students who experience long term absences.



## Parent Volunteers

We consider our parent volunteers to be an invaluable resource. Parents are encouraged to help in the classrooms, as needed by individual teachers, and to assist the school in other areas. Letters are sent to parents at the beginning of each school year specifying the school's needs. If you have time or skills to share, you can help to make our school a better place for students to learn and grow.

## Pictures

Individual student pictures will be taken twice per school year. Class pictures and a fifth-grade panoramic picture are also taken annually. A full color yearbook will also be available to purchase in the Spring and will be distributed at the end of May prior to our Ice Cream Social. We only accept online pre-orders for yearbooks. Parents will receive numerous reminders about yearbook sales and deadlines.

## Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Our parent organization, with elected officers, plays an integral role in the daily workings of Hillside. We strongly encourage all families to join the PTO and become actively involved in school activities.

## Recess

All LCPS kindergarten students receive a minimum of 40 minutes of unstructured play/recess each day and 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade students receive a minimum of 30 minutes of unstructured play/recess daily. Teachers have the discretion to decide how to break up the recess period or periods.

## Report Cards

Report cards are issued to all students at the end of each nine-week grading period and are available in ParentVue. Paper copies of the report are available on request.

The Loudoun County primary grades report card is developmental in nature and provides parents with comprehensive information about important milestones and learning stages for their young children. The intermediate grades (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup>) report card reflects the academic achievement of students through the traditional A, B, C, D, F grading process.

Interim reports are sent home mid-marking period for students whose performance has dropped significantly, whose achievement is below a C, or at the teacher's discretion.

## Safety & Security

Cameras are installed around the perimeter of the building and on all hallways and all major learning areas. All exterior doors are locked during the school day. All visitors are required to show identification, state the purpose of their visit, and are screened through the Raptor school visitor database.

## School Closings, Delayed Openings, Early Closings

In the event of inclement weather or other hazards, school may be delayed or canceled. Parents should check the LCPS Web Page (or listen to the local news for updates on school closings).

Early closings of school may occur if weather conditions deteriorate once students are in school. Please check the LCPS webpage or listen to the news for updates regarding possible early closing.

It is recommended that parents set up procedures for early closing with their children at the beginning of the school year. If a student is to go somewhere other than usual in such emergencies, it is imperative that both the student and the school are informed.

## School Calendar

August 22	First Day of School for Students
August 30	School Holiday
September 2	Holiday (Labor Day)
October 14	Holiday (Columbus Day)
October 28	Student Holiday (County-wide Staff Development)
November 1	End of First Grading Period
November 4-5	Student Holiday (Planning/Records/Conference Days)
November 27-29	Holiday (Thanksgiving)
Dec 23- Jan 3	WINTER BREAK
January 6	Classes Resume
January 17	End of Second Grading Period
January 20	Holiday (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
January 21	Moveable Student Holiday (Planning/Conference Day)
February 17	Holiday (Presidents' Day)
March 3	Student Holiday (County-wide Staff Development)
March 26	End of Third Grading Period
March 27	Student Holiday (Planning/Records/Conference Days)
April 6-10	SPRING BREAK
May 25	Holiday (Memorial Day)
June 10	Last Day of School for Students/End of Fourth Grading Period





### **School Screenings**

All children, within 60 administrative working days of initial enrollment in public school, shall be screened in the following areas: speech, voice and language, fine and gross motor skills, vision and hearing. All students enrolled in grades 3, 7, and 10 will be screened for vision and hearing defects. Those children failing a screening procedure or who are found to need more in-depth testing in any of these areas will be monitored and parents will be contacted. Complete audiological assessment, including tests which will assess inner and middle ear functioning, must be performed on each child who fails the hearing screening.

### **Special Education**

Special education services are available to eligible students whose physical, academic, and/or emotional needs make it difficult for them to access the general education curriculum. Parents should direct questions regarding special education programs and procedures to the assistant principal.

### **Student Council**

The purpose of the Student Council Association (SCA) shall be to develop good citizenship in each student and to provide opportunities to serve in the school and community. Students in grades 3, 4 and 5 are eligible to become student council officers. The SCA will develop yearly goals and sponsor activities toward the accomplishment of these goals.

### **Student Incentive Program**

Our school strives to recognize positive behavior and achievement. In addition to verbal praise, children are recognized in many ways. Opportunities will be made available to recognize students' positive citizenship throughout the school year. All teachers have classroom behavior programs that recognize our students for appropriate behavior. All students are recognized for their positive contributions at Hillside Elementary at the end-of-year awards ceremonies and throughout the year.

### **Student Records**

Cumulative records are kept in the school office for all students. These files contain scholastic records, standardized test results, health and physical fitness records, registration information, gifted and special education records, testing information, and transfer records. Parents or legal guardians can review their children's files and request copies at any time.

### **Substitute Teachers**

Students will occasionally be taught by a substitute teacher. Students are expected to be especially

courteous to substitute teachers and follow all classroom and school rules when supervised by a substitute teacher. Substitute teaching opportunities are available to interested adults. Please inquire with the school administration.

